Sustenance

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/14012652.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham/Wendigo
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Lovecraft Fusion, Wendigo Hannibal Lecter, Eldritch Hannibal Lecter, First Time, Interspecies Relationship(s), Interspecies Sex, Post-Episode: s03e13 The Wrath of the Lamb
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Lovely, Dark and Deep
Stats:	Published: 2018-03-18 Words: 6,384 Chapters: 1/1

Sustenance

by SleepsWithCoyotes

Summary

Will's had hallucinations in the past of Hannibal as some otherworldly creature. Having those hallucinations crop up again when they're wanted men is just horribly shitty timing, right?

Notes

This version of Hannibal is actually one I meant to play with for Halloween last year, except I was too busy honing my rage to want to write. XD So rather than wait until October, here, have some Eldritch!Hannibal. It was supposed to be Tentacles!Hannibal, but I am reliably promised that I'll be given that one soon. :3

See the end of the work for more notes

Charles Thurgood, American expatriate and quiet resident of Isla de la Juventud for the past five years, is not a good man. Will doesn't doubt Thurgood's neighbors would be surprised to learn this about him; they might well be surprised to learn his name. Thurgood keeps to himself, leaving his little house near a stretch of the island's pine forests to pick up supplies, visit the post office, and lure young women into his car. The women don't return. The youngest was fifteen.

When Will brings Hannibal Thurgood's name and profile, Hannibal threads the fingers of his right hand into Will's hair and presses his lips to Will's brow. Will leans into the entirely too-chaste kiss, the smile he can feel growing against his skin. He's had months to grow into this careful closeness, long enough for nerves to fade to shivery anticipation, and still Hannibal pulls away before Will's ready for him to.

"When?" Hannibal asks as his hand slips down the back of Will's neck, briefly caresses his shoulder, and falls away.

I could ask you the same thing, sits on the tip of Will's tongue, but he bites it back with an effort. He doesn't know what Hannibal's waiting for, but if it's for Will to make the first move, he may not have as long a wait as he thinks. "Next Wednesday," he says instead. "It's during the low point of his cycle. No errands to run. It should just be him at home," he says with a trace of regret, "and he will be home."

"And what are your plans for him?" Hannibal asks, handing control over to Will without even a token struggle.

Maybe Hannibal simply knows him too well. Will's spent hours considering Thurgood's fate already, but all he sees is a blank. "Honestly? I just want to make him disappear." He tries not to cringe, embarrassed that he feels any embarrassment over this. It's just that Hannibal probably expected better of him; any common thug can make someone disappear.

The way Hannibal's eyes light up in mingled interest and amusement is a surprise. "The way he did with those girls? The punishment fitting the crime?"

Will shakes his head, inspiration striking at last. The thick stretches of forest that ring the island are largely undisturbed save by tourists and loggers. He doesn't doubt there are graves somewhere under the trees behind Thurgood's house, but that would be too easy. "I want him to watch himself vanish, piece by piece. To know no one will come looking, and even if they did, they wouldn't find a thing."

Hannibal's eyes go soft, so proud they might have already begun the job. "Fitting indeed," he murmurs, and Will wonders for the hundredth time why he doesn't just *do* something already.

He doesn't even know which one of them he means.

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They're careful on their approach, waiting until long after the sun has set to move in. There are no fences, no security lights, not even a dog; nothing to suggest Thurgood has anything to hide, but his home is so far off the beaten path, the arrival of any visitor would be cause for suspicion. They park miles away, camouflaging their rental in the brush of a newly-cleared firebreak, and walk the rest of the way in. Hannibal is eerily sure-footed in the dark, guiding Will now and then past obstacles with a gentle hand under his elbow. He's foregone the plastic suit this time for comfortable-looking clothes that can be burned later, and Will honestly doesn't know whether that's in consideration of the hike or for Will's benefit alone.

They hug the tree line as they close the final distance, waiting for their target's house to go dark. Hannibal is barely more than a shadow at his side as they settle in to watch, but Will is distractingly aware of his proximity. Hannibal has always been a man of towering personality, even while caged, but out here in the dark, the sheer weight of his presence is magnified. Will is almost tempted to lean back into it; Hannibal is ridiculously strong, never objects to contact so long as Will initiates it.

Before he can make up his mind, the light in Thurgood's kitchen snaps off.

Will straightens, fierce excitement coiling through him. Room by room, the house goes dark. Thurgood will be hitting the bathroom now, maybe brushing his teeth. Does he shower before he sleeps or after he wakes? After, Will decides as the bedroom light goes out next. They'll give it a little while longer, time enough for their prey to fall asleep, and then--

Grinning sharply, Will glances over to share the fleeting tension of the moment with Hannibal and feels the entire world lurch sickeningly off-kilter.

This far out in the country, the half-moon is barely doing its job, but in that instant details jump out at him with terrifying clarity. Hannibal's face isn't in shadow; it's carbon black, smooth as marble, a stark landscape of emaciated hollows. Will's eyes prickle and ache at how wide they've grown, desperate to pierce the lie he sees, but the too-familiar creature fills his vision, looming over him. The broad silhouette of black antlers separate from the gnarl of dark branches above as the wendigo tilts its head, regarding Will dispassionately through white, featureless eyes.

"Will?"

He recoils so hard he nearly stumbles over his own feet, and then it's reaching for him, catching him by the biceps in huge, hot hands. It knows his name, and he can't remember just then if he's ever heard it speak before, but it sounds like--

"*Will*."

Nothing but breath emerges as Will's mouth shapes Hannibal's name, but then he blinks and reality shifts again: Hannibal's face, pale and human, gone blank with concern; the comforting solidity of broad shoulders and elegant hands returned to their ordinary proportions. Now that his eyes have adjusted, there's just enough light to see the careful reserve that's crept into Hannibal's eyes, the question he won't voice writ large in the tight press of his lips.

With shaking hands, Will peels Hannibal's own away from his arms and lifts one to cup his cheek, the other his brow. "D-do I...do I f-feel hot to you?" he asks, gripping Hannibal's hands tighter as they lose their tension in his hold. *God*. The doctors told him a relapse was possible, but it's been years. He'd thought he was out of danger, but if his encephalitis returns now...what are they going to do? Can their new identities stand the scrutiny if he goes to the hospital, or will a fresh diagnosis, even as far away as Cuba, be the red flag that brings Jack running?

Hannibal shakes his head minutely. "Between the walk and the cool night air--"

"*Don't*," Will insists, raw pleading in his voice. He can't deal with Hannibal's hedging right now when what he needs is one clear statement to cling to.

Hannibal's face softens as understanding dawns, and all at once, he's all business. Pulling free of Will's grip, he settles the backs of his hands against the sides of Will's neck for a moment before tipping Will's face up with one hand, the fingers of the other feeling for the pulse beneath Will's jaw. The abrupt retreat to clinical mannerisms should perhaps have been disconcerting, but Will submits to it gratefully.

"Any dizziness?" Hannibal asks. "Dehydration, nausea?" Will shakes his head, but not enough to dislodge him. "But you're worried you have a fever. A bad one, I take it."

"I--saw something," Will admits.

"Something unsettling?" The caution is back in Hannibal's voice, but Will's in no shape to decode the meaning of its reappearance.

"The unsettling part was seeing anything at all."

Hannibal nods, palms sliding down to find light handholds on Will's shoulders. "I can check you out more thoroughly once we return home. Do you think you can make it back to the car?"

"What? Now? But we haven't--I haven't changed my *mind*," Will protests hotly, barely remembering to keep his voice down. Confusingly, he's both incensed and mortified at once. "This isn't--I *meant* it. I'm not backing out--"

"Will," Hannibal cuts him off, voice as warm as his hands. "I never considered you would. But there's no need to press on if you're feeling unwell. Our Mr. Thurgood is far more predictable than he is prolific; he'll keep for another week at no risk to anyone."

Will's throat clicks as he swallows, guilt tugging belatedly at the pit of his stomach. He hadn't spared a thought to Thurgood's next victim, though he tells himself he would have once the panic ebbs.

Even when he's not purposefully setting out to do it, it seems he's doomed to disappoint Hannibal at every turn. The fact that Hannibal doesn't look disappointed in the least only makes him feel worse.

"Please," Hannibal says. "If you're experiencing hallucinations, it may have nothing to do with your previous illness, but it should certainly be addressed. For my peace of mind," he cajoles, "if you won't consider your own."

"All right," Will says, slumping a little. Hannibal tightens his grip on Will's shoulders, holding him up. "I feel fine, though. Just distracted."

"All the more reason to return when you can devote yourself entirely."

He knows Hannibal has a point, but he doesn't have to like it. Turning his head aside, he stares out across the scrub grass at the little house at the edge of the trees, committing it to memory. Hannibal's right; Thurgood will keep.

All the same, he'd imagined this night ending very differently, and his own disappointment is a leaden weight in his gut.

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At Hannibal's urging, Will sleeps through most of the drive back to Nueva Gerona, waking only as Hannibal pulls the rental into the garage. They're far enough outside the city that they have few neighbors themselves; he hasn't enquired regarding the price tag on that privacy, not when it comes with its own strip of beach and a small dock for the boat Will had insisted he didn't need. Tourists have wandered in occasionally since they've come here, but so far they've never gotten close enough to engage either of them in conversation. Will hopes to keep it that way, at least until he can convince Hannibal to settle somewhere less tempting for vacation-goers. Maybe then he'll broach the subject of getting a dog.

He hesitates by the trunk of the car, glancing a question at Hannibal, who shakes his head. "Leave the gear for now," Hannibal suggests as the garage door slides back down with a quiet hum and rattle. "We can move it later to a different vehicle if necessary."

Will nods, grateful to leave the details of thick tarps and far less innocent tools for another time. Though he was asleep for most of the return trip, he's exhausted from being in the car for so long and from the aftereffects of adrenaline, and all he really wants to do is rest. "Where do you want me?" he asks instead, aware that on most other days, that would be a loaded question.

"The bedroom, I think," Hannibal replies without missing a beat, "in case you fall asleep mid-examination."

"I won't say it's not a possibility," Will mutters ruefully, shedding his light jacket as he steps into the house. The bedroom happens to be exactly where he'd hoped to end up when they left for Thurgood's place, but he'd been aiming for Hannibal's, not a return to his own.

Disappointment makes him stubborn. Bypassing his own room with barely a hitch in his stride, he pushes Hannibal's door open instead, walking boldly in to plop down at the edge of the man's bed. It's intimidatingly large, had been neatly-made before Will came along, and Will needs to stop drawing parallels in his head *right now*.

Even if it *is* as comfortable as it looks.

Hannibal had been lagging behind him a few paces as they entered the house, and delayed further by his trip to their terrifyingly-thorough medicine cabinet, it takes him a moment to realize Will's door is shut for a reason while his own stands open. He appears in the doorway with his hands full of medical supplies and a look of hopeful uncertainty he doesn't bother to hide.

Will dredges up a lopsided smile, trying to swallow nerves and exhaustion equally. "Well, Doc? Am I going to live?" he prompts to get Hannibal moving.

"If I have anything to say about it, yes," Hannibal promises, approaching at last to set a bottle of pills, a glass of water, and a pen light down on the nightstand. He keeps hold of the electric thermometer, examining it critically as he turns it on before aiming it in Will's direction. "Open, please."

Will snickers despite himself. Maybe he's a little punch-drunk. "Okay, I think I understand why people play doctor now."

Hannibal's sigh is both long-suffering and amused. "I assure you, as your doctor, I am not playing." And then, as he's sliding the thermometer into Will's obediently-opened mouth, he leans in until his lips are nearly at Will's ear, murmuring, "And if I were to play with you, it would not be as your doctor."

Owl-eyed, Will remains on his best-behavior through the rest of Hannibal's examination, trying desperately to ignore the throb of interest that tightens his pants another fraction every time he replays that moment in his head. He's not sure what he'd expected from a seductive Hannibal--lines from Dante or horrible puns had seemed equally likely--but innuendo delivered up in that husky voice at point-blank range, breath warm against his cheek...?

As Hannibal finishes up with him, Will lets out a shaky sigh, but when Hannibal starts to move away, Will reaches out and wraps his fingers around his palm, stopping him in his tracks. It's not just Thurgood, he hopes his eyes are saying. He means this too and has no intention of backing out now. "The verdict?" he asks, not sure which answer he's hoping for. If he's sick, then they have a problem. But if there's no clear cause...they may have a bigger problem.

Hannibal shakes his head. "I'm afraid you seem entirely healthy."

He squeezes back lightly as Will tightens his grip on his hand. His other reaches up to run soothingly over Will's hair as Will slowly leans forward to thump his brow against the ridge of Hannibal's hip. "I was afraid you'd say that," Will mutters, letting his head rest where it is. "I mean, it's not the first time this has happened...."

Hannibal's hand stills, littlest finger just brushing Will's nape. "It's not?"

Will shakes his head. "It started back when I was first getting sick," he says, closing his eyes. It's easier to talk to the darkness behind his lids, Hannibal's woodsy scent wrapped around him. "At first it was just a black stag with raven feathers, but after a while I started

seeing...something else. A man, of sorts. Very tall, very thin. White eyes, black skin. Antlers. He had your face."

"That must have been...unpleasant."

Hannibal's hand slips off Will's head as he straightens, peering up into Hannibal's face. "What do you mean?"

"This began while we were still on friendly terms, correct?" Will nods, confused. "And continued after your illness was cured?" Another nod. "Then to see someone you considered a friend in such a manner, especially later, if the lines of your act began to blur as I suspect--"

"Hey, no," Will cuts in, swallowing hard. "That's--that's not how it was." He hasn't been looking forward to talking about this, though he's always known they'll have to. The little bit of it he'd confessed to Jack was hard enough. "I know what it looks like, but...apart from the thing with Freddie Lounds, the only person I was lying to was myself. And Jack, I guess. I would...I *wanted*," he corrects himself with ruthless honesty, "to choose you. I just couldn't let myself at the time."

He's not sure he's ever seen Hannibal look so open and vulnerable: not with a linoleum knife in his hand, and not in that moment on the cliff. It's enough to drag the second admission out of him with a nervous little laugh. "And if you're worried I've been seeing you as a monster all this time, maybe don't. You've always been a little...otherworldly, you know. A little *too* perfect," he teases as Hannibal goes worryingly still. "There's no way someone like you could be real, so I think my mind was trying to give me a version of you I could come to grips with."

Hannibal arches a brow. When he cocks his head just so, Will can almost see the outline of antlers fanning out in the air above him. "How so?"

"Unapologetically overpowering," Wil says bluntly, even as he's fighting to trap a smile. "A towering figure that casts a long shadow wherever it goes. Hunger that's as much a *need* as a want. Eyes that see me," Will adds, half-embarrassed, "but I don't have to watch them looking. If I were smart, I'd be terrified, but...the visions themselves were never frightening. *Having* them was the scary part. Seeing you like that...does it sound weird if I say you were perfect?"

He grimaces, waiting for a resounding *yes* that never comes. Instead Hannibal goes to both knees before him with an enviable grace Will's not sure he could match, even though Hannibal has a good five years or more on him. Catching Will's free hand in his own, Hannibal rubs soothing circles over Will's knuckles with his thumbs. He looks like a man about to walk off a cliff onto a rope he's never seen.

"Well, then," Hannibal says with a long, quiet sigh. "I suppose it's high time I told you about my family."

Will frowns. "You...have, actually. The sister you raised. Being orphaned--" Hannibal doesn't look contrite, exactly, more like he doesn't know where to begin. "You're not going to tell me that's a lie. I did see the castle."

"Indeed you did, but Count Lecter and his wife were not our parents," Hannibal says with a halfhearted shrug. "Ironically, the reality is more like a fairytale. A kindly, childless couple discovered me and my sister in the woods and claimed us as their own. Not blindly, I assure you," he adds as Will's frown deepens. "I don't believe they were Mother's followers at first, but they knew enough to know there was no binding or ritual that could compel us. But we were very young, new-whelped, and desperately in need of food and safety."

A different kind of epiphany is coming into focus, similar to the evening he realized Hannibal was a killer, but so much clearer. He's hyper-aware of his hands, cradled loosely in Hannibal's own, of the body coiled before him that blocks his way to the door, but the panic he braces to stuff down where it belongs refuses to bubble up. If Hannibal looks--truly looks--the way he thinks he will, then he's seen it already. He's given Hannibal more opportunities to open him up and devour him than anyone deserves, and Hannibal has only taken half, the last one years ago. He wonders suddenly if any prison could hold someone like Hannibal and immediately feels like a fool. Hannibal, able to leave at any time, really had been waiting. For him.

Sliding his hands more comfortably into Hannibal's, he asks, "What happened?" He knows the stories. He's no stranger to ritual. There are prayers he whispers to the sea each time he leaves the shore, though he's never once hoped they'd be answered.

Hannibal sighs. "We were very young," he repeats himself bleakly. "We thought humans would be the only danger, but our mother has many children, and all of us are hungry."

Hannibal's voice is thick with mingled grief and rage, and Will feels it as if it were his own. "Your siblings...ate your family?"

Hannibal nods once, throat working. "My sister was always small for her age. She would have been eaten long before, if not for the Lecters. I was bigger, stronger. I escaped. And when I grew strong enough, I came back and cut them down. And then I ate them, bones and all."

It's disorienting, how things shift and rearrange in Will's brain, above all the unexpected relief that Will hasn't suddenly become the only cannibal in the room. "I'm sorry," he says, meaning it, and that seems to be the catalyst that destroys the last of Hannibal's hesitation.

"Are you," Hannibal murmurs as his skin washes black, eyes filming over with an opalescent sheen. "Even now?"

Will forgets to breathe as Hannibal's bones lengthen before his eyes, broad shoulders going massive as the muscles in his neck bulk and thicken. Antlers sprout from the crown of his skull, only superficially resembling those of a stag: their curve is too wicked, their points too sharp, their sweep impossibly wide. Will nearly makes a grab for him when Hannibal's hands shift carefully around his own, but it's only to spare Will the bite of his claws. He doesn't look quite the same as Will's visions, so at least Will hasn't been lying all those times he claimed he wasn't a seer. Proportionately he's still very thin, but the buttons of his shirt strain with every breath, perfectly settled cuffs now falling halfway down his forearms.

There was a question, Will's pretty sure, one he should probably be answering, but he's preoccupied with freeing a hand to run his fingertips over Hannibal's smooth cheek. He looks

like he ought to be cold as stone, but he's just as warm as he was before.

"I'm told I resemble my father greatly," Hannibal says, startling Will into a brief stillness. Hannibal sounds much like himself, except that his voice is even deeper, roughened by the hint of a growl. "His height. His coloration. His penchant for humans," he adds with a tiny smile--a familiar one that doesn't bare his teeth.

"As prey?" Will has to ask. As strange as it's been after a lifetime of contented heterosexuality to find himself desiring a man, he wonders how much stranger this is for Hannibal.

Hannibal draws in a deep breath through his nose, considering his words. It's newly odd to see him deep in thought, like watching a minotaur consider its next chess move. "As diversions, mostly. But you are universally a delicacy, satisfying and sustaining."

"Me personally?" Will asks with a lopsided smile, only a little strained. He doesn't really think Hannibal's going to eat him--not *anymore*--but it's best to have these things out in the open.

Hannibal raises one of their linked hands to his mouth, delicately unfolding the curl of Will's fingers to lick a long, hot stripe up his palm. "No," he murmurs against Will's fingertips, tongue flicking over the pads with barely-there touches. "Others may sustain me, but you are sustenance itself."

Nourishment at the very sight of him, Will thinks disjointedly--and oh, is Bedelia owed a visit--but by then Hannibal has reversed his path, mouth trailing back down to nip at the heel of Will's palm, tongue tracing a slick trail over the veins of his wrist and down to the bend of his elbow.

"Let me taste you," Hannibal pleads as he mouths his way up Will's bicep, nuzzling hopefully as he reaches the edge of Will's sleeve.

You already are, Will nearly points out, but that feels like a *no, slow down*, when all he wants to say is: "Yes," and "finally."

Will would have thought Hannibal's eyes would be flat and unreadable like this, but there's no mistaking the way they round with surprise as Will struggles one-handed to pull off his shirt. Hannibal isn't at all shy about drinking him in, the trajectory of his eyes guessed by the minute shift of his lashes and the dip of his chin. Lifting one large hand, he spreads his fingers and flexes them so the claws are angled well away before he ghosts his palm over Will's heart.

"You too," Will insists, pushing forward to get at the buttons of Hannibal's shirt before the terrible softness in his blind gaze can mortify Will entirely. The buttons at the top are barely holding on by threads, and Will marvels silently at the musculature he bares: a neck and a glimpse of shoulders strong enough to bear up the weight of those impressive antlers, heavy pectorals and, incongruously, the ladder of his ribs standing out stark beneath the skin. He's a strange collection of power and half-starved leanness, hunger made flesh.

Stretched too tight over Hannibal's shoulders, the shirt resists Will's every attempt to peel it off until Hannibal reaches up and shreds it with his claws, casual as tearing a page from a notebook. He freezes when Will does, but then his nostrils flare. Will's face goes hot. If Hannibal can smell his arousal--

Hannibal tilts his head, the curve of his lips smug. "Is it my strength or my claws?"

The deer-in-headlights look can't possibly be sexy, but Hannibal's amusement sharpens instantly into raw want.

"Ah," he purrs, dropping the last few scraps of cloth to the floor. "It's both."

"Well spotted," Will grumbles, face prickling, "but--oh, fuck--"

Hannibal is much less careful with his hands as he heaves Will up properly onto the bed and climbs up after him, stripping Will out of his pants. His claws leave behind tiny scratches that have Will shivering and arching up for more, even as Hannibal presses him flat. With every line of stinging red he paints on Will's skin, Hannibal leans in carefully to lap away the blood, lids drifting lower with each drag of his tongue until he looks half-dazed on the taste. "Beautiful," he breathes into the blade of Will's hip, dragging the tip of his nose over ticklish skin to bury his face in the crease of Will's thigh. His antlers spread over Will like a forest of knives, pinning him in place without ever touching him.

"God," Will groans, grabbing tight handfuls of the very proper bedspread Hannibal can't possibly be using in the middle of a Cuban summer. Hannibal hums distractedly as he shifts over, *down*, nuzzling at the heavy swell of Will's balls until he's biting back curses and commands. "*Please*."

The word unlocks something, but not enough. Angling his head to the side, Hannibal wraps his lips around the base of Will's cock, flicking tongue and humid breath hot against his skin. It's not nearly enough, but when Will tries to arch up for more, Hannibal is quick to pin his hips to the bed. It's too late; the sharp teeth that graze his shaft are still much too blunt to draw blood at a touch, but now that he's reminded of their presence, he's not likely to forget.

"Jesus, don't stop," he breathes out in a rush, bucking up against Hannibal's hands. Greatly daring, he releases one fistful of the bedspread and takes hold of the nearest prong of Hannibal's antlers instead. It feels strangely intimate, the way any touch to a part rarely bared would be: hands on hearts, a fingertip dragged down the wet muscle of a tongue. Hannibal stills in surprise and gives without hesitation to the ginger tugging of Will's grip.

Gives, pauses, and then surges forward, attention arrested by--

Will laughs as Hannibal's mouth finds the scar on his belly, not only because it's ticklish but because it's entirely predictable. If his laugh is a little breathless, he doesn't think anyone would blame him. The mark has gone nearly white, a strange topography of ridges and valleys Hannibal maps with his tongue, no doubt reconstructing its formation with surgical expertise. The dip where a series of stitches tore and weren't replaced, the line of tiny dots where others were tugged at but held. He kisses every inch, testing the changing textures with his lips. It's strangely sweet, but it's also maddening as hell.

"Hannibal," he pleads, trying the trick with the antler again, but this time Hannibal doesn't budge. "Please. I need--" A questioning hum rumbled against his stomach makes him squirm. "God, your mouth--"

Hannibal takes the hint, dropping his head to lave Will's cock with wet, filthy curls of his tongue. Just when Will's reduced to considering the merits of begging, Hannibal leans up a fraction, opens his mouth, and takes him straight down his throat.

Will's head tips back, every muscle locking as he tries to rock his hips up and finds himself unable to move. It's probably for the best; the lowest prongs of Hannibal's antlers where they first begin to branch press into Will's belly, not yet piercing the skin but close. Hannibal makes a dissatisfied sound, pulling up but not off entirely, and wedges a knee between Will's thighs.

Breath catching as he's manhandled, Will doesn't fight the hands that slide under his legs and push them up and back. The curve of his spine leaves a hollow for the snarl of sharp points that reach hungrily for him with every bob of Hannibal's head. Relaxing into the hands curled under the bends of his knees, he lets Hannibal take all his weight, lost to everything but the slick glide of Hannibal's tongue, the hungry way his mouth clings to Will's cock. He still can't thrust properly, but it hardly matters as Hannibal's hands push at his legs in a steady rhythm, rolling Wil's hips up to fuck his way deeper into Hannibal's mouth.

"Hannibal," Will gasps, a warning this time. "I'm close. So fucking--"

Hannibal's growl of approval undoes him utterly, his brain whiting out as Hannibal draws back just far enough to catch every drop of Will's release on his tongue. Hannibal *savors* him, then dives back down to chase every hint of Will's taste until Will is breathless, oversensitive, legs jerking in Hannibal's grip.

"Oh, fuck," Will gasps, clinging with both hands to Hannibal's antlers. "I can't--"

Hannibal pulls up off his cock but doesn't let him go, tipping his pelvis up until his spine starts to sing at the strain. He's not as young as he used to be, but now isn't the time to mourn years and years of lost chances. He has half a moment to realize what Hannibal intends, and then he's jerking again as Hannibal drags his tongue over Will's hole.

Too many conflicting reactions hit him all at once: shock, pleasure, a squirming tickle of discomfiture in the pit of his stomach for both the act and how good it feels. He'd briefly dated a girl in college both curious and adventurous enough to get close, but he's never had anyone's mouth so close to his ass before, let alone their tongue. Part of him wonders why he's even surprised.

It takes a moment for him to realize the strangled whine he's hearing is coming from his own throat, but as Hannibal licks him again, he discovers how hard it is to stay silent. "I--oh, God. That's--"

He can't quite bring himself to protest, and as shamelessly as Hannibal's going at him, Will's the only one even remotely embarrassed here. He jumps a little as the tip of Hannibal's tongue teases at the tight clench of his hole, coaxing him to open up the way a lover would

ask for a kiss. Christ, they haven't even *kissed* yet. And here he'd thought Hannibal was all about observing the proper order of every course.

Then again, he decides as that too-muscular tongue finally dips inside, skipping right to the main course is definitely *his* style, and Hannibal is nothing if not--*oh, God*--accommodating.

As unsure of himself as he is, embarrassment quickly fades in the face of overwhelming pleasure. Hannibal's tongue is as strong as the rest of him, built on the same scale or maybe just improbably long, with just enough cushiony give that each slick thrust comes close to shorting out Will's brain. Hannibal's hot breath puffs against Will's skin in arrhythmic gusts, like the very act of breathing pales in comparison to getting his tongue in as deep as he can, learning every nuance of Will's taste. Giving up on shame, Will spreads his knees wider, brings his legs up with the intention of replacing Hannibal's hands with his own just to give himself something to hold on to, and jerks again, unprepared when Hannibal strains that littlest bit more to lick directly at the edge of his prostate.

One of his feet fetches up in the nest of Hannibal's antlers, but Hannibal barely seems to notice. His head doesn't move at all, even when Will braces against that unexpected foothold and rocks up insistently into the next press of Hannibal's tongue. It's the perfect leverage, and Hannibal leaves him to it, sliding his hands down the back of Will's thighs to press his thumbs to either side of Will's hole, pulling him open just a little bit more.

It's way too soon for Will to be getting hard again, but in the face of Hannibal's relentless enthusiasm, his body is giving it one hell of a try. All the same, the imbalance of their positions nags at the back of his mind. "Hannibal," he manages breathlessly, "get--get up here. Lose the pants. I want to *feel* you."

There's a touch of longing in Hannibal's groan, but he pulls back just enough to shake his head. "Next time," he promises, voice mostly growl. "In my other form."

"Hannibal."

Another headshake. "You wouldn't--"

"Please."

Hannibal ducks his head, burying his face against Will's leg, but then he reaches down with one trembling hand, claws clicking at the buckle of his belt. Cinched tight around his too-narrow waist, it falls open at once but nothing else drops; Hannibal has to tear himself free the way he had with his shirt, but once he's bare, he takes his time lowering Will's hips back to the mattress.

When Will can finally push himself up to look where Hannibal kneels between his legs, his breath comes to a hitching stop in his chest.

Hannibal is...big. This is true in his human guise as well if Will's furtive glances bear any truth, but in seven feet of eldritch being, it becomes a question of *scope*. At the base it's almost the diameter of Will's wrist, and something odd about the shape tells him he might be dealing with a knot, or...something decidedly non-standard, anyway. The streamlined tip, less

pointed than comfortably tapered, gleams wetly, the thick shaft liberally streaked with slick. More beads up in the wide slit and overflows, Hannibal's cock jumping a little under Will's disbelieving stare.

"I have no idea what to do with that," Will admits. With Hannibal's usual, less-intimidating equipment, yes, at least up to a point. This? Not so much.

"I know," Hannibal says, gently and with a touch of surprise for how calmly Will's taking this.

"You're going to have to walk me through it."

He's rarely seen Hannibal truly left speechless; the thing with the horse may have been the last time. Will also knows how deeply Hannibal feels things, for all that little ever makes it to his face. He knows Hannibal won't blame him for hesitating, but he also knows it will stick with him, that it will be that much harder the next time to coax him out of his human guise if Will shies away now.

"Brave as always," Hannibal murmurs, pale eyes shining a little more brightly than before. "But perhaps...like this."

Throwing a leg over Will's, he shifts until their hips align, bracing himself on a hand he settles beside Will's shoulder. The other reaches down to wrap them up in the same large fist, careful of his claws.

The size difference is all the more striking this way, but Will can't say he truly minds. Though he starts out half-hard, he fills with surprising swiftness, each stroke gliding more easily than before as Hannibal's excitement mounts. That...is going to be useful someday, he thinks disjointedly as he reaches down to tangle his fingers with Hannibal's. Very useful, because his fingers aren't even close to closing around them both, but it's going to be an easy stretch once Hannibal gets inside him, each thrust slicker than the last as he works Will open, and *oh*--

He comes long before he expects to be able to, and watching him sets Hannibal off as well. Will is instantly a mess, chest streaked by their combined release as more pools on his belly. He briefly considers reaching down to feel out any changes to Hannibal's anatomy, but it can wait. Hannibal's not going anywhere. Neither is he.

"All right?" Hannibal asks, though it should be plain to see that he is. Hannibal's just polite like that.

"Perfect," Will says as he holds back a yawn, relaxed and boneless and already hovering at the edge of sleep. He realizes he's forgotten all about his questionable brain when he glances at the bedside clock and sees the bottle of aspirin Hannibal left there earlier along with the thermometer and the rest. "Huh," he says thoughtfully. "I guess the hallucinations were just my brain trying to tell me something. Some of them, anyway."

"Are you disappointed?" Hannibal asks, sitting back and hovering on the verge of rising. Probably to fetch a towel; if he thinks he's running now, he'd better think again.

Will snorts. "They say the memory is first to go...."

Hannibal arches a brow in silence, so Will feels perfectly justified in rolling his eyes.

"What did I literally *just say*, Hannibal?"

He doesn't want to use the 'P' word too often. Hannibal's ego is already big enough to spawn a thousand young of its own.

Then again, if it gets him another smile like the one Hannibal's giving him now, maybe he can stand to feed that particular beast more often.

End Notes

I would add Nyarlathotep/Shub-Niggurath (implied) to the tags, but that really would be tag abuse. XD (I hecking love the Hannibal fandom tags....)

*

"Will," Hannibal calls down the hall, "are you ready to go?"

"Yeah, yeah," Will mutters, grabbing his coat.

Hannibal blinks, lips parted in mingled surprise and a strange nostalgia. "What?"

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